

We Survived

Word Count: 245

Branded for who we were,
Herded into the ghettos
Where we were forced to live-
Our livelihoods destroyed.
We survived. We remember.

Packed into cattle cars for an unknown future,
Some were praying while others cried.
Families huddled together only to be pulled apart.
The chill in our bones wasn't only from the temperature.

When the train came to a halt,
The doors flew open and the soldiers prodded us into formation.
Inspected like livestock, divided into those who lived and those who died
Marched under gunpoint to the rows and rows of barracks.

We'll never forget the stench in the air,
Unwashed bodies, and open sores.
The smoky air left us gasping-
We knew the smell of fear.

Our ears were assaulted by harsh German orders.

Mothers wept when separated from their children-

Cries of desperation mingled with prayers.

Gunshots became like the buzzing of insects.

The coarseness of the striped fabric chafed our skin-

We became accustomed to the hardness of our beds,

Gritty bread stuck between our teeth

And the dirt and mud caked our pores.

Now we know about the other horrors that were faced-

The experimentation and gas chambers,

The mass graves for the starved.

We can be considered the lucky ones.

Once we were liberated, we started life anew-

Still firm in our faith since it was all we had.

Mourning all those who were lost,

But realizing that these times will never be forgotten,

We survived. We remember.